

**FIA, CIS and Federal of Private Child and Family Agencies  
On Policies, Practices and Procedures of Child Placing and  
Child Care Institutions  
P.A. 529 of 2002  
Section 532**

House Bill No. 5645, Sec. 532 requires the Family Independence Agency (FIA), the Department of Consumer and Industry Services (DCIS) and the Federation of Private Child and Family Agencies, to review policies, practices and procedures involving licensing and the contract compliance reviews for child placing and child care institutions. The review was to identify areas of duplication of staff activities and information collected.

The Purchased Care Division (PCD) of the Family Independence Agency manages the purchase of foster care services and monitors contracts for compliance with policy through periodic site visits. While PCD requires interviews with a sample of agency administration, direct service workers, youth and foster parents, the vast majority of time is spent reviewing case records.

The DCIS Bureau of Family Services, Division of Child Welfare Licensing (CWL) is responsible for the review of compliance with Act 116 and the specific licensing rules related to the licensure of child placing agencies, child care institutions, and foster family homes.

The Federation, FIA Purchase Care Division and DCIS Child Welfare Licensing held a Licensing Liaison Meeting on September 18, 2002 to discuss private agency concerns about perceived duplication of PCD and CWL staff activities. During the meeting, boilerplate language was reviewed and both FIA and DCIS agreed to review their respective practices and eliminate areas of duplication.

PCD staff reviewed practices and eliminated elements that appeared duplicative of licensing reviews, including monitoring for medicals, dentals, and foster home certification records. The largest portion of the PCD site visit now centers on policy compliance and permanency related activities (Structure Decision Making).

DCIS Licensing Consultants interview a sample of provider personnel; the Purchased Care Division believes staff interviews are essential to assessing that agency personnel awareness of and following Child and Family Services policy requirements. Policy issues are only addressed in the child welfare licensing rules in the broadest sense.

The Purchased Care Division and the Division of Child Welfare Licensing continues to explore the feasibility of coordinated site visits. There are concerns that joint reviews may be confusing to private providers in that PCD and CWL have different requirements. Expecting a provider to keep the areas under review separate during one site visit could be challenging and result in additional

time spent with the provider. Additionally, the Division of Child Welfare Licensing underwent significant reorganization during November 2002; licensing consultants no longer having assigned agency caseloads, handling assignments on a rotation basis, and initiated a procedural change of not scheduling appointments with providers. Under the best circumstance coordination of site visits would be difficult.

The Purchased Care Division and Child Welfare Licensing have demonstrated excellent communication and coordination when addressing very sensitive issues, such as serious agency contract noncompliance, rule noncompliance, and/or incidence where children have been seriously injured or worse.

FIA is committed to partnering with private contracted providers, being sensitive to their concerns regarding reviews and what may be perceived as excessive oversight. The Purchased Care Division's monitoring of private providers under contract is to ensure the safety and well being of youth.